

The Signs of the Times Pt. 3

Mark 13:14-23

The question I have been asked as a pastor. by far more than any other is, “*Why do bad things happen to good people?*”

The Lord created man in His image as we read in ***Genesis 1:28.***

Genesis 1:28, “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

The Lord gave humans control over the earth, and they began to rule the earth just as the Lord said to, but soon, Adam and Eve sinned and by doing so, they gave up the right to their dominion.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and ate of the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they forfeited all God-given dominion and authority to Satan.

In fact, Paul calls Satan the “**god**” of this **AGE** in ***2 Corinthians.***

2 Corinthians 4:3 even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

2 Corinthians 4:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. NKJV

When Jesus died and rose again, the penalty for sin was paid and He restored the relationship with man, Adam had lost due to sin.

But for now, Satan still has *some* dominion of the earth.

We are currently living in what is known as the Time of the Gentiles and we are living in the Church Age at the same time.

The Age of the Gentiles began around 604 B.C. when Babylon took the first Jewish captives into the 70-year captivity.

The Church Age began on the Day of Pentecost, after Jesus' ascension to heaven. The Church Age and the Time of the Gentiles have been running concurrently since the Ascension.

The Church age will end at the rapture of the Church and the Time of Gentiles will end when Jesus Christ physically returns after the 7-year Tribulation.

Please open your Bibles to ***Mark 13*** as we continue in that study

Last time we were in ***Mark***, we learned how Jesus predicted some trials for those who will be left behind.

Jesus said in ***Mark 13:9***; the trials that will happen will be, “***for My sake, for a testimony to them.***”

Then Jesus said the Gospel must first be preached to all the nations before the End of the Age comes.

Jesus taught how the Holy Spirit will give us the words needed during persecution.

Then Jesus talked about open opposition that will happen during the End Times, even within families.

We ended saying, man wants to try to fix and make the earth perfect, but man is flawed by **sin**, so Jesus will bring the current age to an end in order to create a New Heaven and a New Earth.

After the rapture of the Church, the human race will try to fix the mess of the world and by doing so they will open themselves up to a New World leader who appears to have all the answers.

Today, the passage is on the Abomination of Desolation from the *Book of Daniel*, and the Lord will speak about things that will occur at the midpoint of the Tribulation.

I. When you see it, flee.

Read *Mark 13:14a*

In our mini-series on End Times, we have learned a little about the Church being raptured before the Great Tribulation occurs.

Like a lot of the Jesus' predictions this has a 3-part fulfillment.

The first fulfillment of the Abomination of Desolation from *Daniel* refers to the Hellenistic king Epiphanes IV, who treated Israel with violence and contempt and they rebelled against him.

When the king went into Jerusalem in 167 B.C. to combat the rebellion, his forces entered the temple, set up an altar for Zeus, and Epiphanes IV offered swine as a sacrifice on the altar.

The second fulfillment of the Abomination of Desolation is when Titus and the Roman army in 70 A.D. brought desolation as they defeated Jerusalem and entered the Holy of holies.

After the Temple was burned down, many Christians fled.

The Church historian, Eusebius, said when the Romans came against Jerusalem, “the church at Jerusalem . . . left the city, and moved to a town called Pella.”

The third fulfillment was written about 20 years later by John, as he received a vision from Jesus, in the *Book of Revelation 13*.

John gave a very **specific breakdown** of the *Book of Revelation*.

Revelation 1:19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. NKJV

a. *the things which you have seen* = In *Revelation 1*, John wrote down the things he had seen with the vision of Jesus.

Revelation 1 reveals Jesus in His personal, resurrected Glory!

b. *the things which are* = in *Revelation 2-3*, John wrote a personal letter from Jesus to the churches, about their ministry in this world.

c. *the things which will take place after this. Revelation 4-22*

In chapters *Revelation 4-22*, Jesus says He is going to cause a catastrophic intervention when He steps out of the clouds.

Revelation 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." NKJV

Revelation 4:1: "After these things", are the Greek words *meta tauta*.

“***After***” is the preposition *meta* which shows a sequence of events and refers to things that follow. In this usage, *meta tauta* can easily be interpreted as after this age, the **Church Age**.

I believe the reason the Church is not mentioned in the ***Book of Revelation*** from ***Revelation 3:22*** to ***Revelation 20:16*** is because the Church is not present on earth during the Tribulation period.

After the Church Age, when Jesus raptures His bride, the Church from this earth, the seven-year Tribulation begins.

There will be a generation of people who will not face physical death, because they will get raptured. Imagine millions of people vanishing, and how the people left behind will be astonished.

Once the true believers in Christ are raptured, there are two very different scenarios happening; one in heaven and one on Earth.

There are 2 different judgments mentioned in the NT.

Immediately after the rapture of the church, believers in Christ will go through the Bema Seat Judgment in heaven.

The Bema Seat Judgment is for believers in Christ, where our works are judged, not our sins, and crowns are given by Jesus.

Those who stand before the Lord innocent, because of the gift of Salvation, have our sins covered by the Blood of the Lamb.

Christians will have our works tested by fire to see whether they were done in the power of the Holy Spirit or done in the flesh.

God has promised in scripture that our sins will be remembered no more; *so why would He bring our sins back up to us?*

After the Bema Seat Judgment in heaven, we see the **marriage** supper of the Lamb. Then the Book of Life is opened and the names of all the people bought by the Lamb will be revealed.

Those who choose to stand before God **without** the forgiveness of sin provided by the free gift of Jesus on the cross, are judged later at the Great White Throne, found in *Revelation 20*.

So, while all of this celebration and joy is happening in heaven, a very different picture is being played out on earth.

Planet earth is gearing up for a Great End Time storm where the 7-year period described in *Revelation* and the *Book of Daniel* begins.

All of a sudden, every Christian on Earth will be gone in a flash which will cause utter chaos.

There will also be political unrest because of the missing people.

This will also cause financial ruin throughout the earth, and there will be multiple auto, plane, and train accidents.

The turmoil will cause severe ramifications while different world governments seek to restore civil order and regain control.

According to prophecy found within scripture, this will be the time when one-man steps forward and offers a plan to restore order and he also offers a peace treaty for the Middle East.

We learned a few weeks ago, according to *2 Thessalonians*, the Holy Spirit is restraining the Anti-Christ from being revealed.

After the Church is gone, this guy shows up on the scene and he is a smooth talker, a political genius, and a financial wizard.

The Anti-Christ's first order of business, after the initial chaos is taken care of, is to form a peace treaty between Israel and their long-time enemies.

The conflict in the Middle East has been happening since the time in the *Book of Genesis* where Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham as a concubine and Hagar got pregnant with Ishmael.

But after the short-lived peace plan is accepted in the Middle East, the whole world accepts this charismatic leader's plan.

One of the major disagreements between Israel and the Arabs has been over the Temple Mount. Christ was crucified on Mount Moriah; it is also where Isaac was offered by Abraham.

The Arab nations believe Allah gave Mount Moriah to them; but the Jews know the Lord God gave it to them through Abraham.

Today, the Mosque of Omar (the Dome of the Rock), is on Mount Moriah, but the Jews have always wanted their **Temple** rebuilt on that location, this is why the fight continues.

In recent years, sonar testing has shown the Mosque of Omar is actually built where the court of the Gentiles of the Temple was and not in the exact location, of the previous Temple.

Revelation 11:1, Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.

Revelation 11:2 But leave out the court, which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles NKJV

Picture how the peace treaty could happen, “Hey Israel, hey Muslims, how’s about building the new temple next to the mosque with a wall in between? **So, both sides can be happy.**”

One reason we know we are not in the Middle of the Tribulation is we don’t have a New Temple. As John was receiving the vision in **Revelation**, he received a vision of the New Temple.

According to **Revelation**, during the first half of the Tribulation, there will be 7 Seal Judgments, 7 Trumpet Judgments, and many people will die and there will be a lot of devastation.

But even during this judgment against a Christ rejecting world, God shows mercy. The Lord will place His seal on 144,000 Jewish men to deliver the Gospel to the people left behind.

Even during the Tribulation period, some come to Christ. Then...at the mid-point of the Tribulation; the Abomination of Desolation is revealed.

The Abomination of Desolation is when the Anti-Christ stands in the Holy of holies in the rebuilt temple and places a statue of himself there and demands to be **worshiped** as God.

II. A key to interpreting *Mark 13*.

Read *Mark 13:14b-20*

These warnings are specifically addressed to Jews. The reference to house tops, as well as the reference to the Sabbath, all speak to a **Jewish** audience.

Deuteronomy 22:8 "Every new house you build must have a barrier around the edge of its flat rooftop. NLT...because "The tops of houses in ancient Judea were flat."

According to *The Voice* website, "*Biblical accounts mention various parts of such structures, especially the roof. The flat roof was often used for sleeping in order to escape the heat.*

It is also mentioned as a place of relaxation and as a cool retreat during the heat of the day.

"It was also a convenient place for storing grain and other items. Joshua 2:6 tells us that Rahab hid the Hebrew spies on her roof among sheaves of grain."

These warnings in *Mark 13* are for Jews as the Abomination of Desolation will be presented in the Temple in Judea.

Again, the Church at this point has already been removed as they went through the **rapture**.

John 16:33 In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." NKJV

Jesus said we will have tribulation, but the Great Tribulation is God's judgment on a Christ-rejecting world, not on Christ's bride the Church.

One of the reasons the Lord sends the Great Tribulation on to a Christ-rejecting world, is for the evangelizing and **restoration** of God's people Israel, after the departure of the Church.

Luke 21:24 they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. NKJV

After the Abomination of Desolation is placed in the New Temple, the Anti-Christ demands to be worshiped, and...

This causes the Jews to realize Jesus was the Messiah and so they will flee to the rock city of Petra in modern day Jordan, to escape annihilation by the Anti-Christ and his followers.

Zechariah 12:8 In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them.

Zechariah 12:9 It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication;

...then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. NKJV

After that the Bowl Judgments will come upon the unbelieving world, as the greatest genocide ever known begins.

There will be a one-world religion, economy, and a revised form of the Roman government.

Once all of the 7-year judgments are complete, Jesus will return with His saints together with Him and then the battle of **Armageddon** ensues.

Christ will do battle using His Words of truth.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. NKJV

God's timing is perfect. The organization and inventions of the pagan world have actually helped the evangelism of the world.

For example, in the first century the widespread use of the Greek language as well as the network of Roman roads allowed many people in the world to hear the Gospel.

But when the Jewish people rejected Christ, they were temporarily cut off from the blessings of a relationship with God and as a result, the Gospel was given to the Gentiles.

When the time is right, God will restore the nation of Israel and they will come to faith in Him, ending “*the Times of the Gentiles.*”

Henry Ironside, “*These faithful Jews, will flee in haste, not waiting to take their goods with them, lest the fury of the Antichrist be upon them.*”

They are exhorted to pray that their flight will not be in the winter or on the Sabbath day which indicates a different condition of things to that prevailing in this present age.”

The conditions of the Great Tribulation will be so terrible that unless God shortens the days no person or animal could survive.

For the sake of the elect, the **remnant** of Israel, the Lord will shorten the number of days by intervening before the total annihilation of the world.

III. False Messiahs.

Read *Mark 1:21-23*

The second half of the Tribulation is described as 1,260 days in ***Revelation***, based upon the Babylonian calendar of 360 days.

During the Tribulation, those who have turned to God will be looking for Jesus to return and deliver them from the wrath.

C.H. Spurgeon said, “*Christ’s coming will be sudden, startling, universally visible, and terrifying to the ungodly.*”

Mark 13:22 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Satan will attempt to deceive people by offering false messiahs, and finally offering the Antichrist as the Messiah.

Those who truly know God are the elect and because they know His Word, they will be prepared to **refute** all those deceptions.

If you know the Bible and you have His Holy Spirit living in you, you can’t be deceived about Jesus’ coming, or false christs.

Think about the miracles the Lord worked through Moses and how Pharoah’s magicians tried to duplicate the miracles.

Exodus 7:10 Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

Exodus 7:11 But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

Exodus 7:12 For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

Exodus 7:13 And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. NKJV

In the midst of an unmistakable miracle from the Lord, Satan provided Pharaoh with a reason to **doubt**, and Pharaoh seized on the doubt and hardened his heart.

Alan Cole said, "*Magic was very prevalent in Egypt, and a number of papyri deal with the subject.*"

We must remember, not all miracles are from the Lord, and Satan, the father of lies, can imitate some things.

This is an example of demonic power appearing to be a miracle.

Miracles can prove that something is **supernatural**, but they do not always prove that something is from the Lord.

The magicians were intelligent men, but they lacked God's wisdom. Pharaoh **ignored** God's sign and hardened his heart.

IV. Practical Application.

The Great Tribulation is God's wrath poured out on a Christ-rejecting world, but the Great Tribulation is also meant to correct and **restore** His chosen people, Israel.

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. NKJV

Why do bad things happen to good people? Why would the Lord allow Israel to go through such a time of correction?

I read a story about “A woman who was visiting a working replica of a silversmith shop as the silversmith held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up.

The silversmith explained that in refining silver, someone needs to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were the hottest, in order to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; and then she recalled the verse which says, “He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.”

The silversmith said, “If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman asked the silversmith, “How do you know when the silver is fully refined?” He smiled at her and answered, “Oh that’s easy, when I see my own image in it.”

In the same way, our Lord refines us through the fires of life, the whole time watching every moment, so we do not get ruined, but long enough until He sees His reflection in us.

2 Corinthians 4:8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

2 Corinthians 4:9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. NKJV